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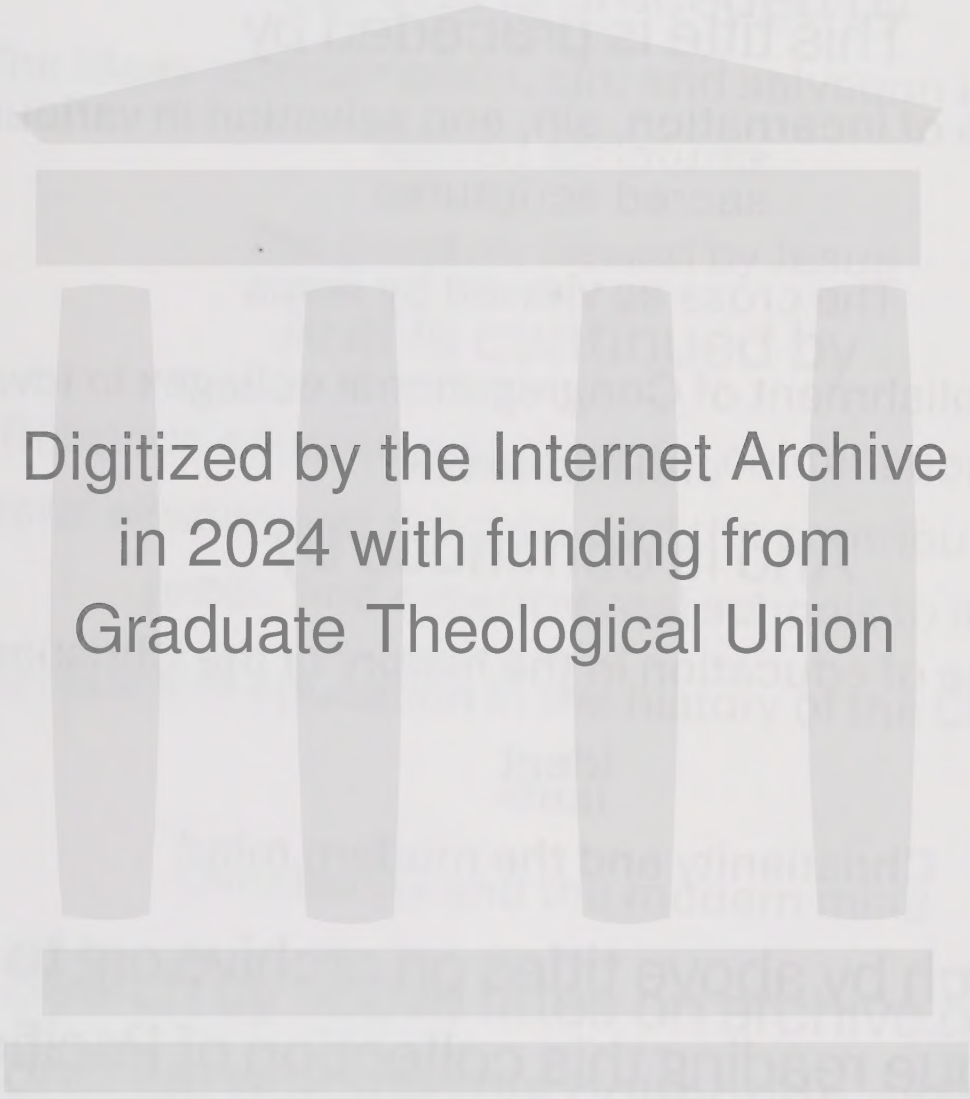
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RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AS THE CULMINATION OF THE TOTAL EDUCATIONAL PROCESS, AND THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF PUBLIC AND EXPERIMENTAL SCHOOLS TO IT.

By

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INTRODUCTION

There is a growing conviction that the hope of future stability in America depends upon her answer to the challenge of religious education. Our peculiar problem in this country from the religious standpoint is lack of appreciation for things spiritual, and disregard for tradition. American tourists blunder noisily through the cathedrals of Europe with a lack of respect that shocks the natives and marks us as a nation of iconoclasts. Religion is a force that has gathered momentum through countless ages of human experience, and is therefore inextricably bound up with tradition. It represents humanity's highest aspirations; and yet we allow our children to be trained in every subject but religion. Is it any wonder that our people are spiritually starved, and know not the meaning of reverence?

If religion is as valuable to humanity as many of us believe it is, our children should be introduced to the religious experience of past generations. Religion should be assigned to the highest place in the educational program, where it belongs, and all the best that education can offer should be used for the improvement of religious educational methods. We are beginning to realize this, but actual improvement is slow. This thesis is one attempt in many to encourage our people to forge ahead in the field of religious education, and to urge the Christian Church to open-mindedly consider every advance in secular education which may lend itself to the training of character.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AS THE CULMINATION OF THE TOTAL EDUCATIONAL PROCESS, AND THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF PUBLIC AND EXPERIMENTAL SCHOOLS TO IT

PART ONE

THE COMMON PURPOSE OF SECULAR AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION, AND THE DUTIES OF EACH IN ITS ATTAINMENT

Since the separation of Church and State is decreed by the laws of the United States, the duty of educating the children of our country in matters of religion has fallen upon the Church. Although the Church did its best to nourish education during the early struggles of this nation, as the country became more prosperous, the public school developed more and more independence, and finally broke entirely away from its parent, the Church. A study of the history of American education reveals the fact that the public school forged ahead in a rapid growth similar to the increase of material wealth of the United States, following the Civil War. Indeed, the Church itself, which was the center of community life in early America, has now been forced into the background of public consciousness in a large number of cities and towns, these communities to-day being school-centered. While ecclesiastical leaders have, in general, approved of the usurping by the public school of the main duties of education, they have felt increasingly that secular education alone cannot build the highest type of citizen-

ship, and that the religious note should be brought back into the total educational program. In this thesis the church men are supported by most of the leading secular educators of America. Both factions, generally, agree that religious education must be done by the church if it is to be done adequately under the laws of our land.

While this remarkable growth in popularity and efficiency has been going on in secular education, the Church has not been altogether indifferent to her duty in religious education. Just as the leaders of public school education have been experimenting and building their great organization, so have certain far-sighted clergymen and laymen of the church been attempting to advance the methods of religious education. It is only natural that the public school, backed by tax money and supported by law, should have made great strides ahead of the church with its meager income and interest in education. It is natural, too, that the builders of the church school should have looked with envying eyes (and are still looking) at the advance of secular education, and that they should attempt to copy the procedure of the stronger organization, feeling that it is the acme of educational achievement. The church school has gained much by following the example of the public school, for in so doing it has been pulled out of its original condition of inefficiency and weakness. Moreover, along with this growth of educational method there is the accompanying advance of educational theory, which

will also be of great help to the development of religious education in the church.

While the two phases of education, religious and secular, have much in common, and while there is really a common purpose for both, yet there are certain principles and conditions in the church school that should differentiate its procedure from that of the public school. Although religious educators recognize this fact, many of them still persist in imitating a system which the foremost secular educators are condemning to the scrap heap. Is it not possible for the church to develop a technique of its own in religious education, making use of those elements in secular education which are valuable to it, but not accepting those methods in wholecloth? May not the church profit by the experiments in education which are being carried on in demonstration schools throughout the world, and use some of the discoveries made in these laboratories without waiting for the public school to try them out? These are some of the questions which are to be treated in this thesis, following a study of the objectives of secular and religious education.

SOME REASONS WHY THE CHURCH HAS BEEN RETARDED IN ITS EDUCATIONAL TASK

One of the first questions that arises in connection with the subject of progressive education in the church is in regard to its educational procedure in the past. When compared with the public school, the church's accomplishment

in the field of education is conspicuous for its lack of progress. When we consider the fact that the church in the past has not been interested primarily in training children, but rather in saving the souls of adults, it is not unusual that the public school should have advanced so far in education and left the church behind. The training of childhood was delegated entirely to the public school, and that institution has arisen remarkably to the emergency. Feeling that their particular task was to preach the gospel to men and women, and believing that the children could gain their Christian nurture by being exposed to the church service while in attendance with their parents, the ecclesiastical leaders placed the educational responsibility upon the school. Realizing their misjudgment as the new interest in "children as children" and not as miniature grown-ups came into vogue, the preachers began to adopt the idea of the Sunday School, which had grown out of the experiment of Robert Raikes in England. Many ministers at first scoffed at the Sunday School idea, for the original Raikes plan was for the teaching of secular subjects on Sunday. The plan finally took hold, however, and there started the meager movement of the church into the educational field. These early Sunday Schools were not taken seriously, and were considered only an appendage to the main work of the church, in order that the institution of the church itself might be perpetuated. The history of religious education in America from the founding of the first "Sunday School Society" in Philadelphia in 1791

to the formation of its latest and most progressive promotor, the "Religious Education Association"in 1903, is an account of success and failure, joy and sacrifice on the part of its exponents. While the development of the movement in efficiency of method has been slow, with the exception of the last quarter of this century, yet the results in perpetuating the institution which fostered it have been altogether gratifying. No doubt the statement of Benjamin Trumbull is largely true, "America has been practically saved to Christianity and the religion of the Bible by the Sunday School". [I]

Closely connected with this idea that the function of the church is to "preach" rather than "teach", and that the education of children could be taken care of by the public school, there has always been a dominant note of conservatism among church people. This tendency to hold on to the traditional methods of doing things is not a characteristic of the church alone, but seems to be a natural accompaniment of institutionalism. It is evident in politics, and certainly is not lacking in the machinery of the public school itself. The church, however, has a lion's share of conservatism, and there are several reasons for this attitude. The church, as an institution, has left behind her golden era of material power. To the man of vision there is no reason for pointing back to those "good old days"

[I] Trumbull,R. ----------Yale Lectures on the Sunday School, p.3

when everybody went to church, or for urging a return to former conditions of life as a means of salvation. But there are a large number of people in our churches who see no hope for the future except through a repetition of what was done in former generations; the revival, prayer meeting, etc. There is a certain quality in religious practices that endear them above all other customs to the hearts of those who have followed those practices. These things become "sacred" to the faithful souls who have done them for years, and should not be denied them. Neither should such custom stand in the way of the progress of the church as it seeks to meet the need of the younger generation, with different standards and ideals.

Associated with the backward look of the church through its affinity for "custom", is the theology which has been introduced into the Christian religion. If the church fathers had only been true to the teachings of Jesus instead of building up such theories as "original sin", "judgment", "infant damnation", etc., there would have been much more of the forward look in the church, as implied in those teachings, than the backward look that accompanies such a theology. The basic principle of the creed, namely that truth can be once and for all laid down as thus and so, is the worst feature of Christian theology as far as the progress of the church is concerned. The doctrine of infallibility, having been read into the Bible itself, has carried over into the whole attitude of the church. That

such a principle would block progress and stimulate conservatism is easy to see, for if the statement of truth has been settled in the past, what can be done in the future other than conforming to that standard?

The principle of the fixed law of God, laid down for eternity in a credal form, also had a very definite effect upon the church's attitude toward science. Martin Luther said that man was like a "pillar of salt"; that man did nothing and God everything. This idea was also reflected in the Westminster Confession. The implication of such a hypothesis is that there is no hope for the future betterment of humanity through its own progressive thought, but only through a return to what has already been stated in the formal creed of the past. With the majority of churchmen looking to the past for their inspiration, it was only natural that when the era of science dawned, the church should take her stand as conservative. Scientists and churchmen found themselves separated by an ever-widening gulf, for one group believed that Truth could be gained by observation of the natural order, and the other that Truth was delivered for all time to the saints. While attempts are being made in this century to reconcile science and religion by the far-seeing men of both interests, there still remain within the ranks of both a large number of the narrow-minded type, each dogmatic in his own field.

The significance of the scientific era, and the stand taken by the church for religious education lies in the

fact that the secular educators immediately sided with science. Science courses have taken a very important place in the curriculum of the public school, and the methods of secular education have been subjected to scientific scrutiny. The church, on the other hand, is just now beginning to awaken to the need of applying the scientific method to her own procedure. Instead of simply "preaching the gospel", the time is now approaching, through the vision of progressive leaders of religious education, when the church will scrutinize scientifically her methods, from the viewpoint of psychology, philosophy, sociology, and education, seeking to improve her methods and efficiency. In reality, the church has the possibility of being the most potent social agency in existence for the betterment of the human race. Church people are conscious of the possibilities of their institution, but they are generally ignorant of the best ways in which to go about their task. Here again the old conservatism asserts itself and says "do it in the same old way".

THE PURPOSE OF SECULAR EDUCATION

There is more and more of a tendency among the prophets of education to emphasize the building of character as one of the purposes of education. These men do not mean "development of character for character's sake", but the development of it as a best possible means of insuring the highest service to society.

The ultimate purpose of education is, as stated by some educators, "social efficiency".[I] It would not be impertinent to ask how many public school officers and teachers have this conception of the purpose of education, and still further, how common such an objective is in the mind of the general public. As far as the American people are concerned there is without a doubt only a small percentage who think of education in any other sense than as discipline for the child, or training in the fundamental subjects that fit him for life. Many superintendents and teachers are too much involved in the routine of keeping the vast machine of public education moving to stop and think of objectives. We face here the old problem of the gap between theory and practice. Both are essential in the progress of every human agency, and the problem lies in the fact that theory tends to advance too far into unreality, while practice fails to see beyond its immediate task. Men in both fields must continually review their thinking in order to keep a sane balance; a balance which will insure a reasonable advancement of theory, and its continual application in practice.

It is inevitable that as the theory of education advances further along the line of "social efficiency" and its natural accompaniment, "character development", that it will find its motive increasingly religious.

[I] Course of Study Monographs, Elementary Schools, No. 4. Berkeley. p. 13

There are still some educators who believe that society can attain a satisfactory degree of excellence without the guidance of religion. The very word "efficiency" implies such an attitude. This term has been borrowed from the business world, and is too shallow to carry the full meaning of the highest purpose of education. While the attainment of efficiency in business, or any field, is very desirable, there is no assurance that it will be any more than a selfish motive. Thus a corporation may seek to be efficient not for the purpose of serving the public more adequately, nor for treating its employees generously, but only to fatten its own pockets. I would suggest, therefore, that the ultimate objective of education be defined as "social harmony", for this ideal would require the best from every individual. And substituting the term "social harmony" for "social efficiency" as the ultimate purpose of education does not hold up an ideal that is too high. The word "harmony" implies efficiency of the first order, and beyond that it includes the essential idea of complete effectiveness on the part of every individual in society. It also carries with it the concept of a social order that fits in perfectly with the symphony of all the forces of the universe, and with the will of its Creator.

THE PURPOSE OF SECULAR EDUCATION IDENTICAL WITH THAT OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Certainly one of the very obvious objectives of religious education is the development of character.

Character is defined as "what a person is".[I] It is measured in terms of behavior, and thus at once ushers us into the realm of morals and social relationships. The highest development of character therefore assumes the highest degree of perfection as a member of one's social groups, beginning with the family and extending on through larger units until it includes the society of the world itself. The Christian Church holds the belief that one man did attain this state of perfection in character, and it stands to-day as a witness of this fact. The church believes, moreover, that such achievement in character as was evidenced by Jesus is a revelation of the nature of God Himself, and that man is only doing his duty to his Creator when he strives to the utmost to follow the example of living set by Jesus. Here, in brief, is the purpose of religious education in the Christian Church: to develop character among its constituency that is Christ-like, and to bring about "social harmony" as expressed in the words of Jesus as the "kingdom of God".

In the conception of the "kingdom of God" which Jesus taught we find both the individual and the social elements. Jesus said at one time, "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: neither shall they say, Lo here! or There! for lo, the kingdom of God is within you." (Luke xvii. 20,21) According to this statement the highest good is to be

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I Webster's International Dictionary, under 8

found in the spiritual development of personality, a finer expression of what the educator would call "character". Again Jesus said, "Go your ways, behold I send you forth as lambs among the wolves. And into whatsoever city you enter, and they receive you, eat such things as are set before you: and heal the sick therein, and say unto them, 'The kingdom of God is at hand!'" (Luke x. 3,8,9) Here we have expressed the social concept of the kingdom, which is still better illustrated in what Jesus said to his disciples when he heard of John's doubt as to his Messiahship, "Go and tell John what things you hear and see: the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good tidings preached unto them." (Matt. xi. 4,5) This is the real expression of what the kingdom of God means, namely that society shall be cured of all physical, mental, and moral diseases, and that every individual shall have an equal opportunity to develop his spiritual self, aided by the teaching of those who have come nearest to Truth. This is what is meant by "social harmony", and toward this end education and religious education have their great task to perform.

Having defined the term "social harmony" in its relation to the Christian conception of the "kingdom of God", the former concept will be used through the rest of the thesis as expressive of the purpose of both secular and religious education.

HOW EDUCATION SEEKS TO ATTAIN ITS PURPOSE

While the highest ideals of secular education and religious education are the same, there is some difference as to the method of attainment. Secular educators are continually pointing out the fact that the studying of secular subjects, and the participation of the pupils in the social activities of the school are important factors in the building of moral character. The moral agencies of the public school have been listed by one educator as follows: "discipline, punctuality, honesty, fair play, team work".[1] That these qualities are instilled into the child's character indirectly through the acquiring of habitual observance of such virtues is a theory of secular education. This method of teaching morals is based on a sound psychology, and should be given credit for doing its part toward the purpose of education in the development of character.

Another factor in the moral training of the child, as claimed by the public school, is the acquaintance which he gains with the noble characters of the past through the study of literature and history. Here the child comes to recognize moral qualities, and by association through reading, to exemplify them in his own personality. Likewise, and of still more importance, comes the third factor of significance, the character of the teacher. This is a case of personal contact and observation in

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1 Martin, G.H. - School Activities for Moral Development, R.E.A., 1904

which the learner really catches the spirit and example of a good life. There can be no doubt as to the validity of these principles in character-development as far as they go. But do they go far enough? This is the question that is being asked frequently to-day, and asked to such extent that state legislatures are being instructed to pass laws permitting the reading of the Bible, and classes in so-called ethics are being organized here and there throughout the land. The evidence points to the fact that though secular education has the highest ideal, yet somewhere along the line it is failing to advance as far as it should toward its purpose of building character and bringing about social harmony.

WHY SECULAR EDUCATION CANNOT COME CLOSE ENOUGH TO ITS PURPOSE

The wide gap between the actual achievement of secular education and the ideals of its leaders cannot be completely filled by the indirect methods outlined in the preceding section. The attempts of the public school to build character are based upon an old fallacy -- the idea that morals can be separated from religion. The public school has done its task well as far as it has gone, but it has reached its limit as a moral agency. What is its limit? Its limit lies in the fact that it must base its standard of morality upon expediency. To teach a child that he should be honest, loyal, obedient, and industrious for the sake of social welfare is worthy

indeed, but it is not the highest possible incentive for moral character. For this one must turn to religion.

Obviously, the power of religion to stimulate activity toward the achievement of character and social harmony lies in the conception of a God who is personally interested in the individual. The particular expression of this God which Christianity embraces is that of "Fatherhood". No Jew or Catholic would have any more objection to this concept in the public school than would a Protestant, but from the purely scientific point of view when we use the term "Fatherhood" we are subscribing to a religious creed. Although we claim to be a Christian nation, and the concept "Fatherhood" is the Christian's expression of what he believes the nature of God to be, yet if our educational system is to be entirely free from sectarianism, we have no right to dogmatize in our public schools as to what sort of a Being God is. Probably only a minority of the parents of children in our schools, being "atheists", or believers in another religion than Christianity, would object to the teaching of a personal God as implied in "Fatherhood" in the class room. Nevertheless these few have a right to their opinions in a democracy, and they have made known their demands at various times in the history of American education. The question of Bible-reading in the schools was presented to the Supreme Court of Wisconsin in 1890, in which case the court ruled that "The reading of any version of the Holy

Bible in the common schools as a text-book without restriction, although not accompanied by any comment by the instructor, is sectarian instruction within the meaning of Section 3 of Artical X of the Wisconsin Constitution, and is thereby prohibited." "The decision of the Supreme Court of Wisconsin may well be called epoch-making," says one writer on this subject. "There are many public schools in which the Bible is still used. But the tendency all over our country is toward the acceptance of the Wisconsin decision as an authoritative description of true Americanism." I

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AS THE CULMINATION OF THE TOTAL EDUCATIONAL PROCESS

The most obvious difference between secular and religious education in their attempts to build character and promote social harmony is in the fact that religious education recognizes the will of the Divine Power as the incentive of attaining its ultimate goal, while secular education is based on the hypothesis that social harmony for humanity's sake is sufficient. Thus the philosophy of the former is based upon Theism, and the latter upon Humanitarianism. That there are probably a majority of men and women engaged in secular education who are adherents of the former philosophy is not denied, but the fact remains that if secular education is to abide strictly

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I Crooker, J.H. - Religious Freedom in America

by the laws of the land it is necessarily forced into the humanitarian viewpoint. Though this philosophy is good as far as it goes, it is not capable of holding before men the highest motive for good conduct.

The question now arises as to the reason for assuming that the "will of God" is a greater incentive toward the achievement of social harmony than the popular conception of "happiness for the greatest number". Is it not a higher motive that man fulfill the will of the Being that created him than that he attain social harmony for his own satisfaction?

My conclusion is that the incentive of religious education is the more powerful and that it should therefore be delegated the special task of character-development in its highest sense. This conclusion is nothing new or startling. Educators, church leaders, and laymen recognize this fact almost universally in our country. The tragedy is that they fail to take it seriously. Realizing that this important duty lies upon the church, they still regard the Sunday School as an unimportant and inefficient appendage of that institution. Instead of being delegated to such a low position in our scale of values, and rather than being scorned as a weak attempt to imitate the efficient public school, the church school should be respected as the highest step in the total educational process. When once placed in its true category the church school will be that organization to which all secular

education leads up. In other words, that gap which is so keenly felt to-day between secular education and the attainment of its ideal in social harmony will be more adequately bridged by religious education, and thus the two phases of the educational process will be working together for the attainment of their common goal.

Some misunderstanding may arise at this juncture from the fact that the church school is placed above the public school in the educational process. This does not mean, as might be implied, that religious education is more important than secular education. One is just as important as the other, and if it were possible to teach religion in our public schools, and conduct worship, there would be no advantage in dividing one process from the other in the total program. Robert Raikes, when he started his "ragged" Sunday Schools, found that there was little use in trying to teach the children anything about religion until they had learned to read, write, and keep certain rules of decent conduct in the class room. Were it not for the public school to-day our church school would be laboring under a similar handicap, and would be forced to use most of its energy in teaching the fundamentals of knowledge. It is because the public school exists, and because secular education has opened up to the children of our country such a fund of knowledge that there is coming a need for religious education which was never felt before.

The public school has created the situation and paved the way for the church to take hold and do a marvelous piece of work in the development of a spiritually-minded America.

PART II

AN EVALUATION OF THE EDUCATIONAL METHODS THAT HAVE BEEN ADOPTED BY RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

THE USE OF THE TEXT BOOK

With the creation of the Sunday School it was easy to choose a text. It was very obviously the Bible. But soon the teachers of the Sunday School began to feel the need of a text-book which was organized and graded to fit the needs of their pupils. They had been stumbling along as best they could, each class being a law unto itself, making use of their time in the memorization of Bible passages and catechisms. Finally, progressive superintendents and leaders attempted a remedy of this confusion by selecting certain lessons for all the classes in their school to follow. In 1823 a superintendent in Utica, New York, Truman Parmale, got together "a list of lessons based on selected passages of Scripture, taken from the Gospels and the Acts, the title of the work being, 'Questions on the Historical Parts of the New Testament'".[I] The next year the "American Sunday School Union" printed a list of selected lessons on the life of Christ, and from that time on there was an increasing demand for curriculum material. Soon the various denominations rushed into the field to supply the need for their churches.

[I] Betts, George Herbert -- The Curriculum of Religious Education

Following the introduction of the text-book, one of the pecularities of the Sunday School method of instruction was the creation of the "International Uniform Lessons" by B.F. Jacobs, a Baptist layman (1872). The theory back of this system was that the work of Sunday Schools throughout the world could be simplified and drawn around a common purpose by having every school study the same lesson on a given Sunday. This meant, of course, that every class within the Sunday School had the same lesson. The idea caught the popular imagination of the church world and was almost supreme in the curriculum field until in 1893, when it began to suffer the inevitable attack of those who saw the need of grading lessons to fit the various age groups.

The significance of the uniform lesson system to the status of religious education at present is noticeable, as pointed out by Dr. Evans[I], in the extended use of the Akron plan in church architecture. This type of Sunday School equipment, with "pigeon hole" class rooms grouped around the superintendent's platform, was built to fit the uniform lesson idea, with centralized leadership for the entire school. It was a departure from the public school system of separate classes; also an evidence of the "preaching" emphasis of the church being carried over into the Sunday School. It naturally had the effect of making

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I Evans, Herbert Francis -- The Sunday School Building and Its Equipment

the superintendent an expositor rather than a teacher. In a few visits to unprogressive Sunday Schools within the last year, the writer noticed that this old method of preaching "at" the children was still carried on by some superintendents during the opening exercises.

Having adopted the text-book, the next step of the church was to initiate the public school method of grading its curriculum. In 1895 certain denominational publishing houses began to introduce graded lesson series to displace the uniform lessons. This was a significant move, for it was the first evidence of the church's interest in the child as a child. The teachers of the primary age first expressed their need for graded lessons. They were unable to use efficiently the subject matter which had been prepared for all ages, but primarily for the adult mind. The adoption of the graded series, incorporated from the public school methods, was indeed a step forward in Sunday School practice. It led eventually to a more detailed study of a child-centered program of religious education. On the other hand its danger lay in the fact that teachers and officers in Sunday Schools came to depend too much upon the resources of others through the over use of the "quarterly". This tendency is deadening to initiative, and many church schools are no more advanced to-day than are the quarterly systems of their denominations. In adopting the text-book system of the public school, the Church School has made itself susceptible to the danger

of having book-confined teachers. In character training no set procedure can be efficiently used by every class just because all pupils in a certain grade are uniform in age. The text should be a teacher's reference book, not a formula.

GRADING ACCORDING TO CHRONOLOGICAL AGE

The law which has determined the grouping of children in the public school into class units is the law of chronological age. Thus when a child begins his sixth year he is commonly started in the first grade of the public school. Each year following he is advanced to the next grade on consideration of the fact that he has successfully completed a certain definite amount of work in reading, arithmetic, etc. So hard and fast has become this rule that one can compute the age of a child fairly accurately by adding five years to his grade in public school, or can discover what grade he is in by subtracting the same figure from the child's age. This method of grading is the basis of the entire organization of secular education. As a standard for classifying children it is, of course, based only upon the convenience of using year periods as the cycles of achievement in learning.

The Church School has followed the public school in the use of this standard method of grouping its pupils, partly from convenience, and partly because it is easier to keep together the social units which are developed in the public school. Such a plan of grading is acceptable

in religious education in so far as it classifies pupils into groups of the same ability and achievement, which naturally conforms to chronological age. As far as such grading is based upon the knowledge of Biblical facts, or of quarterly lessons, the church is at fault if it follows the public school. In secular education there is being developed a new theory of grading which does not displace entirely the chronological system, but which takes into consideration the ability of the pupils, and allows those who are especially intelligent to go beyond the class of their own age. This does not refer to the common plan of "skipping grades", but to the formation of separate classes for those who are especially bright, and for those who are not up to normal. Grading according to this plan in the church school would not be advantageous, but this illustration is used to show the possibility of a similar idea in another connection; namely that of "purpose". (This conception will be developed further in Part III, where the subject of social grouping will be considered more in detail.)

In conclusion: The use of chronological grading in religious education is inevitable, since there is no more logical method by which to group children according to intellectual ability and interests. The church has also emphasized the principle of grouping in three year periods, as in the Primary, Junior, Intermediate, and Senior Departments. In so far as this latter plan follows certain

definite life cycles in the development of the child, it is valuable. I do not think that the grading of the church school should be based upon such strict rules of chronology as in the public school, since its emphasis is upon "will" and "emotion" rather than upon intellect. Its organization is less formal. Religious education should take more interest in individual cases than in the general laws of grading by age.

THE MACHINERY OF ORGANIZATION

In late years we often hear the criticism of such and such an organization as having "too much overhead". We have heard this same criticism leveled at our modern methods of religious education, in this case not refering to an overhead of money, but one of time and energy. Many of the older church people feel that the church will do better work by limiting its machinery of organization to the minimum and sticking to personal evangelism. There is a good deal of common sense in this attitude. Religious educators need only look across at the public school to see what possible danger lies in an over emphasis upon machinery.

Similar to the principal of the public school, the church has its superintendent; and to the board of education, its board of religious education. Beside the general superintendent, the church school has its department superintendents. Then there are the various secretaries, treasurers, departmental assistants, etc., all of whom are quite essential to the proper running of the school. Dr.

Cope[I] suggests a new unit within the church school organization; a board of supervisors for the entire school to consist of directors of study, teaching, work and play, pageantry and dramatics, and worship. The duty of these officers is to see that their own particular field of interest receives its proper attention. Beside the above officers there are of course the teachers, often divided into various staffs according to departments. Some of these teachers may represent foreign organizations which are fostered within the church, such as the Boy Scouts, Girl Reserves, etc. Often such leaders are extra and add a few more to the total number of officers.

The question now arises as to whether such a staff of workers in religious education does not constitute an overhead. Would it not be possible to cut down the workers in the church school to merely the necessary teachers and department superintendents? My answer would be that there is no danger of overhead in such a staff as long as every officer is doing his or her task, and not merely filling a position which exists only in name. Herein lies the danger of the over organized church school, namely that positions are created for certain people just to give them a title, and thus to add to the appearance of the administrative list of the school. A well-filled list of officers does not guarantee a healthy church school.

[I] Cope, H.F. -- Organizing the Church School

STANDARD CLASS ROOM EQUIPMENT AND ARCHITECTURE

Mention has already been made of the Akron plan of Sunday School structure in its relation to the Uniform Lesson system. Fortunately for religious education this type of equipment is being abandoned in the structures of the present day. Many Sunday Schools, built a generation ago, are still handicapped by having to adapt the cubby-holes and the larger waste space of the assembly hall to the new demands of religious educational practice. Again the church school has turned to the public school as an example, and has seen that efficient instruction is possible only through the use of individual class rooms, sound and sight proof. Along with this feature of public education there have been introduced improved methods of heating, lighting, and ventilation. Since the class units of the church school are much smaller than those of the public school, it is found convenient to have the pupils grouped around a center table, rather than arranged in straight rows of desks as in the latter. This is a distinct advantage, and a break from the conformity of secular education which has important consequences in the class room procedure of religious education.

That the church school has profited in following the example of the public school in the use of separate class rooms, and improved physical conditions is quite evident. But there has been an accompanying danger in the readiness with which religious education has followed secular in the

matter of equipment. The danger lies in the fact that the traditional beauty and refinement of ecclesiastical architecture will be disregarded from a purely utilitarian viewpoint. This tendency has already shown itself in the planning of some of the community houses and religious education plants throughout the country. I, II Although utility should be given first consideration in the building of an educational unit, it should not be allowed to displace the church atmosphere, evidenced in such features as the gothic window, and the familiar Christian symbols. Any church that strips its educational plant of every trace of ecclesiastical art is robbing itself of a potent agency in its work.

THE SURVEY METHOD AND PUPIL RECORDS

In keeping with its scientific viewpoint, public education saw the necessity some years ago of subjecting its own procedure to scientific scrutiny. Before placing a public school in a given district, an accurate survey is made of the number of families, their economic condition, etc. This is merely an application of the scientific method of looking at the facts before attempting

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I Second plans of the First Congregational Church, Sacramento, California.

II Athearn, W.S. -- The Malden Survey. See illustration, page 59, of the parish house of the First Baptist Church, Malden, Mass.

the act. It is an important step toward efficiency. The church is trying to make use of the survey method to some extent, but it still labors under the terrific handicap of denominational rivalry, a condition which cripples efficiency at the very start. It is to the credit of religious education leaders that unbiased surveys have been made of certain communities[I] to determine the status of religious education as carried on by various denominations. This is the first step toward a united effort in this field, and promises a better day in the future.

Beside the general survey just mentioned, there is also the particular survey of the work of each church in religious education. The results of this procedure give the director, pastor, and teacher a definite knowledge of the interests, ability, and home conditions of every pupil, if properly carried out. The church school teacher is generally more intimately acquainted with the parents of his or her pupils than is the public school teacher. A further application of the pupil survey method in religious education will be a step forward in the efficiency of teaching religion.

TEACHING METHODS AND CLASSROOM PROCEDURE

Secular and religious education have blundered along together in their teaching methods and classroom procedure. They have made the common mistake for many years of being

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I Athearn, W.S. -- The Indiana Survey - The Malden Survey

"subject-" rather than "pupil-centered". While the public school teachers have been absorbed in trying to get a proper reaction from their pupils in the use of the "three R's", the church school teachers have sought to instill into the child mind some knowledge of the Bible. In neither case has the approach been from the standpoint of the child, with regard to his interests and capacities. Research in psychology, and the application of this science to both fields is bringing about a shift of emphasis from subject to pupil.

In "Part I" of this section we mentioned the danger of static teaching methods involved in too close an application of the text book. Secular and religious education are both guilty of this kind of pedagogy. The danger is more acute in the church school to-day because so many of the teachers are untrained volunteers. At the same time the church school has the advantage over the public school in the fact that its classes are much smaller, with a greater opportunity for discussion and personal interview.

Moreover, the church school class can be less formal because of its limited number. I should say that religious education is making a great mistake if its teachers do not get away as far as possible from anything that is stilted; for example, the common procedure of having the pupils answer certain questions printed at the end of the lesson, or fill in blank spaces where the continuity of the sentences has been purposely broken. This is an

attempt merely to register information, and it neglects the central principle of all religious teaching, namely "inspiration". The class in religious study should be open to the freest discussion, wherein the teacher acts as counselor, and not as dictator of the activities of the group. The recent interest of religious educators[I] in the "project principle", again adopted from secular education, is a great step toward pupil-interest and informal class room procedure. Along this line, I believe, lies the hope of the church school class for making real progress.

REWARDS FOR ACHIEVEMENT

Secular education has made an extended use of the system of rewards and prizes for pupil-achievement. From the old "spelling match" to the present system of marking pupils according to their ability, the main incentive has been artificial rather than natural. Toward the opposite extreme, the public school has made use of punishment where the reward failed to stimulate pupils as desired. By the very nature of its organization, the church school has fortunately failed to make use of the latter method very extensively; its only weapon has been expulsion. Whether prize, reward, or punishment are used, they are all based upon a poor hypothesis. Each emphasizes something external to the thing which is to be achieved. Thus the natural incentive to study and become proficient

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[I] Shaver, Irwin L. -- The Project Principle in Religious Education

in history is the acquiring of a knowledge of history, and the artificial incentive is to be at the head of the class, or to make a grade of "A". The natural incentive for cooperation in the church school class is not the "gift of a book" by the teacher, but the experience that the pupil has gained in social living and contact with his leader.

While the system of grading for merit has not been adopted extensively in religious education, there is a still more destructive practice in the church school. This is the giving of prizes for attendance and lesson preparation in the form of pins and gold stars. In this case the incentive is entirely artificial. Much valuable time is wasted in the keeping of records, awarding of prizes, etc., where this system is carried on. It is a natural expression of former educational ideas, that proficiency can be measured in terms of facts learned and Sundays present. Admitting that these factors are important, they certainly should not have the major emphasis. The real purpose of religious education is character-development and social harmony. I see no excuse for bits of silver paper as substitutes for the greatest incentives humanity knows.

PART III

PROGRESSIVE EDUCATION AS A GUIDE TO RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

In Part I we concluded that secular and religious education should cooperate in trying to attain their common goal of social harmony and individual character. In Part II we reviewed briefly the methods which religious education has taken from the public school finding some of these helpful and others unfruitful for use in the church school. We now proceed to a consideration of certain methods that are not generally pursued by secular education, but which may be well adapted to the particular problems of religious education.

CERTAIN ADVANTAGES PECULIAR TO THE CHURCH SCHOOL IN ITS EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

Both secular and religious education are in constant danger of too much centralization, but the public school has more to fear along this line than the church school. The centralized control of religious education thus far has been limited largely to the curriculum field. "The tendency is strong today in our public education toward greater centralization and more machine-like organization of unprogressive uniformity, losing moral initiative of the

individual teacher, the touch of his life upon the life of the child."[I] In the church school (as contrasted to this statement) there is generally more responsibility put upon local leadership in the development of the educational program. This is a distinct advantage, and one which the church should jealously guard, for denominational dominance of religious education is a real danger. The ideal arrangement is one in which every church school has local autonomy, sharing its experiences with other church schools, but not controlled by any outside agency.

The advantages which the public school has over the church school are familiar, and need only be mentioned. They are principally tax support, trained teachers, compulsory attendance, discipline backed by law, and sufficient time for instruction. There are only two of these factors that would be of real value in religious education; trained teachers, and more of the child's time. Church school leaders are making progress in both of these directions. There are a number of distinct advantages that the church school has to its own credit. They are, beside the local autonomy mentioned above: consecrated teachers who work for "love rather than money", the motivating force of religion, the prestige of an aged institution, the reputation of being organized around the highest ideals of men, children largely from homes that are sympathetic with its program, and smaller class units.

[I] Griggs, Edward Howard -- Moral Education, page 65

Much could be said about each of these factors separately. They will be mentioned again in connection with certain principles for religious education which are to follow, with special emphasis upon the subject of "small class units".

THE CLASS UNIT AS THE BASIS FOR ALL EDUCATION

Some say that the basic element of all education, secular and religious, is the relationship between teacher and pupil. Education can be carried on thus, but it is not possible to attain the best fruits of learning by limiting the process to this dual relationship. Such personal contact has its place in education, but the highest achievement is possible only through the class group. The reason for this is obvious when one thinks of education in the social sense. While each pupil learns through his or her communion with the teacher, yet he also learns by contact with other pupils in the group. If this group fellowship is denied, the education of the individual is lacking in one of its fundamental purposes: the building of social consciousness. One need only contrast the child who has been trained at home under a private tutor with the child who has attended school to appreciate what social experience in education means. While the tutored child may have a greater knowledge of facts, because of the concentrated attention of the teacher upon his problems, yet the school child will be

far more balanced in his social relationships. We may conclude, then, that the actual basis for all education is the class unit.

WHAT CONSTITUTES A "CLASS" IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOL

When one thinks of a "class" in the ordinary public school sense of the word, he usually visualizes a group of forty children of about the same age, seated in straight rows of wooden desks, facing a teacher's platform. The whole arrangement gives the impression of uniformity, with the major emphasis upon the teacher as the dominant factor. The function of the teacher is twofold: first to keep order, and second to see that every pupil acquires a certain amount of text-book knowledge. This knowledge is given to the children in "slices", arithmetic for forty minutes, then geography, then reading, etc. Arithmetic is divided up into smaller portions also, such as adding, subtracting, multiplying, and dividing. Geography, too, is divided into studies of North America, then South America, Europe, etc., and likewise reading with its various assignments. Thus the public school class gives the general impression of conformity; the fitting of every child into the same mold; the production of standardized individuals.

WHAT CONSTITUTES A SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASS?

When the prefix "Sunday School" is attached to the word "class", one has a somewhat different picture. The

imagination portrays a small group seated around a table with the teacher. The perfect order and stiffness of the public school room does not fit in this picture, but there is a naturalness about the group that makes up for any loss at this point. Thus far the scene is more satisfying, and one says to himself, "Ah, this is nearer to real education!" If he examines the group further, however, he finds that like the public school class, these pupils are receiving their religious education from a systematized text-book, divided off into sections of study for each Sunday. While it is less extreme in its insistence upon conformity, he discovers that only in outward appearance is this class different from the one of forty. He rejoices that the Sunday School has not followed the conventional methods of the public school in every respect, but wishes that it might break the remaining barriers of a static curriculum and adult control.

THE "NEW EDUCATION" AND THE CHURCH SCHOOL

While there have been many changes for the better in both secular and religious education in recent years, yet, in general, both public school and the church school still follow the old regime. Part II of this thesis is an attempt to show how closely religious education has followed secular education in the past. In the meantime there have grown up in this country and in Europe a number of progressive private schools that are experimenting in the field of what is called the "new education".

The results of these experiments have much to offer both to the public and church school. In America, however, our public school system has become so centralized that it is difficult to make any change. We may look forward to the day, in the interests of coming generations of children, when public education will adopt these new principles of progressive education. In the meantime is there any reason why the church school should follow the public school methods, and not take advantage of what is being discovered in the interests of a better education? That the church has nothing to lose and much to gain by taking its stand with the adherents of the new education we shall try to prove in this thesis. By the nature of their organization, and through the principles of local autonomy, many of our larger liberal churches are in an unusually advantageous position to foster a "new religious education", based upon the findings of these progressive schools.

Perhaps the key word in the new education may be best stated as "initiative", as contrasted to the former educational principle of "conformity". "We have established that doing is essential to the child's learning. We accordingly place a number of candidates for education in rows of seats and demand that they sit quietly and listen, or memorize material that we have selected for them, or perchance we let them draw or do manual work or write, following the forms we have devised, making the measurements we dictate and using the tools we indicate

in the way we direct. The only activity we leave to the children is the activity of obedience to directions."[I] This quotation makes a rather satisfactory summary of the old principles of education, as opposed to the following statement concerning the new. "The rule of the New Education is that there are no rules, no universal methods. Each teacher must find her own unique method of education and when she has found it she must be prepared to adapt it to every child. Each child is a distinct problem, unlike all other children." [II]

The underlying philosophy of the new education is found in certain theories of John Dewey, which may be summed up as follows: that the interest of the child should be tapped first, and that this will awaken the intellect; that life in the school must be lived in and with the group; that education should be a "living" rather than a preparation for future life; that children must be put into situations, not subjects. These principles are carried out with the belief that there is no antagonism between child-nature and education, and that "antagonism results only when we attempt to educate children in a way that is unnatural to them." [III] The methods pursued

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I Samuels, Adelia Adams -- An About Face in Education, p. 13

II Ensor, Beatrice -- Editorial page of The New Era, Oct. 1925

III Hartman, Gertrude -- Materials and Methods of the New Education, in The New Era, Oct. 1925

are developed from the natural play life of the child, which encourages activity rather than passivity in learning. This demands more equipment for every class room, in the line of blocks, crayons, pasteboard, sand tables, etc., with ample space for the pupils to move around the room at will. The class group is considered an essential factor in building the social experience of every individual, but formal class room procedure of the public school is not followed. Since social intercourse between pupils is believed to be a creative force in the new education, the children are allowed to talk with each other, and go to and fro as they wish. The curriculum, instead of being a static, prepared course of lessons, must be dynamic in nature, being made as the work develops and growing out of the experiences of the children. "We no longer teach slices of geography, history and the like. We carry on what might be termed the research method, that is, the children search out the answers to their questions. The teacher helps them by providing material and by directing them to sources of information." [I]

HOW FAR CAN THE NEW EDUCATION BE APPLIED IN THE CHURCH SCHOOL?

It is encouraging to find that the new education is being introduced to religious education to some extent through the "project principle". This is only a beginning,

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[I] Hartman, Gertrude -- Materials and Methods of the New Education, in The New Era, Oct. 1925.

however, for our church school classes are still largely teacher-dominated, and curriculum-centered. The ever present discipline problem in the church school is a witness of the fact that pupil interest is at a minimum in the average class in religion. The prevalence of prizes in our Sunday Schools is an indictment against their interest value also.

In the kindergarten and primary departments of many church schools the informal methods prescribed by the new education are followed. The children are permitted to center their interests around the sand table, drawing board, and in other hand work activities in a natural manner. According to the Dewey plan this method should be carried into the older departments of the school also. The question arises as to whether such a procedure is not limited to secular subjects which involve handwork, and if so, how far can it be used in the teaching of religion. It is the writer's opinion that the "activity" plan may be carried on through the Junior Department of the church school, introducing projects in the geography of Palestine, the making of miniature implements used in Biblical times, the compiling of religious picture books, costuming, dramatics, and social service. This work would involve not only individual effort, but group activity toward a common purpose. In place of the ordinary recitation of the quarterly lesson, it would substitute a dynamic curriculum, in the process of creation. Instead of attempting to

keep the pupils quiet for an hour to listen to the lesson, the teacher would suggest activity along lines of vital interest. This activity would not necessarily be carried on every Sunday, but rather, alternated with periods of correlated class work.

In religious education we face a problem in advocating individual freedom which is not present in the secular field; namely, worship. While the new education plan of guided individual pupil activity should be encouraged in the Elementary Department class units, there should be maintained a formal social procedure in the conduct of worship. Here a large group cooperates and subscribes to the leadership of an adult, each member conducting himself in keeping with the common purpose in the worship of God. In this way the church school would maintain the desirable element of mature guidance in the worship service, and would reap the benefits of the new education during the class hour.

THE GROUP PRINCIPLE AND THE NEW EDUCATION

While the principle of pupil activity outlined above should apply in general to the entire range of religious education, there is another theory of education which is especially adaptable to the secondary departments of the church school. This is the group principle as developed by Miss Cora L. Williams in her Institute of Creative Education at Berkeley, California. Some of the aims

of Miss Williams' Institute are stated as follows:[1]

1. To make the child's relationship to his fellow students our chief concern. Association is creative of a larger consciousness for the individual only if he is able to give of his thought to the group and to think with it.
2. To make group-thinking one of our school and college activities.
3. To reduce the size of classes, so that group thinking will be possible.
4. To avoid competitive marking systems. For fear and anxiety inhibit thinking, and rewards lead to self-aggrandizement.
5. To develop in the child a creative will and a creative intelligence.
6. To have thought for the child's spiritual development, as well as for his mental and physical.

A study of the above principles shows that Miss Williams' theory of the group coincides with the "new education" at many points. It encourages more of the social rather than the individual activity prescribed by the Dewey philosophy, however. Both theories insist upon creative activity in education instead of teacher dominance.

THE GROUP PRINCIPLE IN THE HISTORY OF CHRISTIANITY AND IN THE CHURCH

The group principle has its foundations in the very beginning of Christianity, and has been made use of throughout the history of the church. It is the basis of all fellowship and is especially adaptable to religious fellowship. It is obvious that Jesus realized the importance of the group in his work, using both the small intimate

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[1] Cora L. Williams Institute for Creative Education Bulletin No. 22, June, 1924

group of the three chosen disciples, and the larger group of twelve. During the early period of persecution the Christians met in small groups for worship, and these were the beginning of the church. Not until later years did the church develop into an institution for the carrying on of formal worship for crowds of people. When this did occur, in place of group fellowship it became necessary to appoint certain individuals to lead worship, and there developed the priesthood. Though gaining much in power and prestige through this change, the church lost a great deal in sincerity, for the tendency was for the people to put the responsibility of worship and religious thinking upon the priest.

The use of the group principle in the Protestant Church is nothing new. The whole organization of the church is made up of small groups that function for various purposes, such as sewing circles, clubs, prayer meetings, etc. Many pastors have gathered around them a small circle of intimate members of their flock in whom they confide concerning the problems of the church. In the Sunday School there are numerous class groups, as well as social organizations. Nevertheless the most important phase of church life is usually thought of in terms of the total congregation, under the leadership of the pastor, rather than the small group functioning through its own initiative. That there is a real place for directed mass action and crowd worship in the program of the church

is not denied. We could not expect any institution to hold together if it was completely split up into separate units. The ideal organization is one that is made up first of individuals, then of small active groups of individuals, and finally of a large group, including both individuals and the smaller social units. The church thus far has been considered, and considered itself, in the first and last of these categories, with little thought as to the second. It has been a congregation, made up of individuals. While making use of the small group principle in its organization for convenience, it is the writer's conviction that the church has not studied or profited by the real power that lies within the small group; a power that has unlimited possibilities in the religious realm. It was the inner circle that caught the true message of Jesus after all, though he touched many single lives outside of that intimate fellowship, and though he swayed the crowds with his life-giving words.

POSSIBILITIES IN THE GROUP PRINCIPLE FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

In a previous section we concluded that the class group was the basic unit for religious education. The advantage of the small class in the church school has been emphasized, and the reason for this now becomes apparent. According to the experiments which Miss Williams has conducted, the ideal size of a group is ten or twelve. Miss Williams bases her conclusions on the

fact that class groups of this size are capable of the highest group consciousness and achievement. To make the principle of the group which we seek to apply to religious education clearer these lines are quoted further from Miss Williams' writings:[I] "To keep up with the progress of life we must learn to think together. To discover that art and how to teach it to children is the purpose of our pioneer school of creative education. ---I do not need to tell you that we mean by creative education the creating of personality and the more abundant life that it brings. ---The effort of the Institute is to show that by means of the small class, and the inducing of the group mind (as distinguished from the crowd mind), the individual can be lifted to a higher level of mental and spiritual insight and power than he could otherwise attain. ---In place of the recitation and old time hearing of lessons, our classes meet in round-table seminars limited to ten pupils."

The class group of religious education is conducted in many cases along the very lines that Miss Williams suggests. It consists of a group of ten pupils (more or less), gathered around a table, with the ultimate purpose of developing personality. Thus far religious education has advanced. But only in these premises is the ordinary church school class following progressive

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[I] A Pioneer School in California, Cora L. Williams Institute Bulletin No. 23, 1926

educational theory. With the right foundations, and the same objectives as progressive education, it is attempting to use the old-fashioned methods of the public school. Instead of encouraging group co-operation, the church school is playing up individual achievement through competition. Instead of developing a dynamic, growing curriculum, it is following a closely graded series of lessons, prepared by an external agency; attempting to thus fit every child into the same mold. Instead of allowing the children to gather in natural interest groupings of an informal nature, it is prescribing an intricate system of departments and grades. Instead of carrying its benefits into all phases of life, it is making a separate compartment for religion, limited to one hour on Sunday, and ending with the ringing of the superintendent's bell. Instead of making use of the natural creative instinct of the child, it is trying to make him conform to a standard conceived by adults. Is it any wonder that the Sunday School, lacking the arm of the law, has fallen short in its attempt to teach religion according to the precepts of public education?

HOW A GROUP SHOULD FUNCTION IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

It has been suggested that the elementary departments of the church school should be organized around the principle of creative activity. This creative activity may be carried on in group units of varying sizes, but not

exceeding fifteen. In the secondary departments there should be less individual work and more group functioning, with the emphasis more and more upon social relationships. Let us consider a typical group of adolescent boys, carrying on its work in religious education according to the principles of progressive education.

At the beginning of the term the teacher has an open discussion with the group on the purpose of religious education. This discussion may require two or three class periods. It begins with the general problem and leads to a conclusion concerning the most profitable course of study for this particular class to follow for the coming semester. The conclusion is the product of the thought of the group, guided by the maturer mind of the teacher. The subject is one which has arisen in the experience of one of the boys, and which is of equal interest to the others. It happens that this particular lad has just returned from a trip to one of our national parks, and is enthusiastic over what he has seen. Among the other subjects suggested, this seems the most attractive: a study of the national parks of America. "But what has that to do with religion?" asks another boy, for the group has decided that the Sunday class hour should not be wasted on something which is not directly in keeping with the purpose of religious education. "Well, let us see if there are not some religious values connected with this subject," suggests the teacher, and he tactfully guides

the thinking of the group from this particular interest into the broader social aspects of the conservation policies of our government. The boys begin to see that there are possibilities in this seemingly non-religious subject for a Sunday School class project, under such headings as: "What is our government doing for us?" "What do we owe to future generations?" and "Does the religion of Jesus encourage social foresight?" The group begins to create its curriculum around these vital interest questions, and assignments are made for reports and contributions. Several of the members feel that they would like to pursue a course of study on the national parks along with their Sunday discussions. This time should not be taken from the regular class period, so the teacher offers to meet the boys on Thursday evenings for this study. Maps, lantern slides, moving picture films, etc., are collected, and Thursday evenings are devoted to a period of research and fellowship which is closely associated with the Sunday meeting. Thus the group finds itself getting under way in a true project in "creative religious education".

THE RESULTS OF GROUP ACTIVITY

The results of using the principle of the creative group in religious education should be equally as gratifying as the results which are being attained in the experimental school where this method is being tested. As compared to the usual procedure of a fixed curriculum and adult control in the class, the group method is producing greatly increased interest in school work, a

lessening of the discipline problem, more pupil initiative, better concentration, a more adequate knowledge of the facts, and a finer sense of social responsibility. These results are to be striven for in all education, and the church should waste no time in adopting the best methods available for the efficiency of her program in religious education. The group principle can be applied more advantageously here than in any other field, for the foundation of the religion of Jesus is fellowship. The informal gathering of the twelve disciples around their Master was the most ideal example of the creative group that has ever been known, and its unusual power was largely due to the fact that its supreme motive was religious. In religious education to-day, handicapped though it is with lack of leadership, there are unrealized possibilities in the informal creative group. The church school should be built for the group, rather than the group being made to fit the machinery of the organized Sunday School.

SOME CHANGES IN THE ORGANIZATION OF THE CHURCH SCHOOL IN THE ADOPTION OF PROGRESSIVE EDUCATION

Under the term "progressive education" are included the two principles previously suggested: the "new education" with its theory of interest and free activity; and the "group" idea. While both these theories are suggested as applicable to the entire range of church school activities, it was stipulated that the former should be especially applied to the Elementary Departments, and the

latter to the grades above the Junior division. With this in mind there are certain desirable changes in the organization and equipment of the church school as it now exists.

1. A curriculum based upon experience.

A static curriculum, standardized for various age groups, is now the basis of religious education. As we observed in Part II, this system was taken over from public education, and has been closely followed in the church school. Since progressive education is founded upon the premise of pupil initiative, it is contrary to its laws to make extensive use of static curriculum material. As soon as a teacher, or superintendent, attempts to dictate to a class the course of lessons which they shall follow, he is cutting off one of the greatest avenues of education; namely, the use of the creative instinct in his pupils. While there may be opportunity for this to express itself in following a standardized text-book, this is only secondary to the interest developed when the group actually builds its own course of study, based upon experience. If we believe that "interest" is an important factor in achieving the purpose of education, then the creative principle in curriculum-making may well be incorporated in religious education.

The difficulty that immediately arises in connection with the development of a separate curriculum for each class is the incompetence of teachers to guide their classes in such procedure. It is clear that this is a real barrier,

for the success of the plan depends entirely upon the originality of the teacher and his ability to guide tactfully the thinking of the group in the right channels. The answer is that this method may be introduced slowly, class by class, under the close supervision of the director of religious education in the local church. Thus the standard of class room procedure can be gradually raised to the level of this new ideal of progressive education. Like all reforms it should be a process of "evolution" rather than "revolution".

2. A flexible time schedule.

It is a recognized fact now that the Sunday hour is inadequate for a full, developed program of religious education. Without reference to the work of the Week Day Church School, it would be very profitable for the active Sunday School group to meet during the week to complete a project in hand, or simply for social fellowship. It is the writer's conviction that the religious group should "hang together" in many of its activities outside of public school time, and on days other than Sunday. Many classes are following this principle in the form of clubs, but these are frequently tied up to some external organization with a standardized program. The ideal situation is one in which a group voluntarily decides to meet on week days in order to carry on some work which is connected with their real purpose as a class of the church school. Fellowship between members,

and with the leader, is more than a mere "by product" of such a meeting. When fellowship is guided by a creative purpose there is no stronger bond for any group.

It is unfortunate that religious education has been linked so closely in mind with the single hour preceding the formal church service. Our churches could make better use of their equipment by distributing the Sunday School exercises more evenly over the entire day rather than concentrating all the activities into one hour. Teachers often feel that the class period is too short for the most efficient work, and yet, like the public school, we insist upon the dismissal of the whole organization upon the ringing of a bell. (Experiments in extending the Sunday School time to cover the whole morning are being conducted at Winnetka, Illinois.)[I] It is conceivable that our whole plan of action in the conduct of Sunday religious education will be changed from the traditional to a more practical plan.

3. Grouping according to interest and purpose.

In the matter of grading we should again find as our key word "flexibility" rather than "conformity." While chronological grouping is a good general principle to follow, there should be allowance for exceptions to this law in religious education. Since the ideal group for class work is about ten, there will be a considerable

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[I] Davies, J.W.F. -- Winnetka Plan of Religious Education
Religious Education Magazine, Feb. 1926

number of classes of about the same age in the average church school. These groups may be built around natural social units, growing out of the public school or the play life of the children. It is natural that there should be various types of boys and girls, some more serious minded, others of a different nature. It is also natural that certain individuals will be either ahead of, or behind their age in intellectual, or physical development. In the church school the individual child should be helped to pick the group which will be the most congenial to his particular interests and needs regardless of age. The boy or girl with a deep religious background and a definite purpose in life should not be forced to adjust himself or herself to a group that has none of these qualities. This individual should be given an opportunity to develop his personality within a harmonious group, where he is understood and appreciated. If one is afraid of the encouragement of "exclusiveness" by such a plan, he may well remember that the child is thrown into contact with all types of children in the public school and on the street for five days of the week, and thus forms his larger acquaintance. It is the inner circle of true companionship that the church school group should seek to represent.

4. The size and arrangement of rooms.

Space is at a premium in most religious education plants. It is often possible for a large city church to

purchase land in the suburbs at a price that allows ample room for an educational plant. A church that is thus fortunately situated may develop a garden and outdoor recreational facilities, both of which will be of great value to its educational program.

If the free activity plan of the new education is to be carried on in the Beginner's, Primary, and Junior Departments, these rooms will have to be built larger than they are usually constructed in the average church school. If the departments are large in members it would be well to have two or three spacious rooms where hand work and activity could be carried on. Leading off the large rooms there should be two or more class rooms, to be used alternately by groups that are meeting for more concentrated study. In the Junior Department, where single group concentration becomes more important, the smaller class rooms mentioned above might be provided for at least half of the groups making up the department, being used alternately.

In the Intermediate, Senior, and Young People's Departments separate class rooms are essential for all groups. Many of our churches, however, make the mistake of constructing these rooms no larger than the "cubby-holes" of the Akron plan, thinking that any space is adequate as long as it is shut off from outside disturbances. This is a mistake. If the conservation of space is necessary in building a new plant it would be

well to dispense with an assembly room in order to increase the size of the class rooms. A class room for ten pupils should be at least fifteen by twelve feet, attractively finished, and with ample window space. It is not conducive to good work to crowd a group of ten children into a small niche that is just large enough for a table and chairs. The church school plant should be built for the group first, with arrangements for larger worship units made if necessary in accordance with the platoon system.

5. A library and children's chapel.

When the church school adopts the pupil activity and creative curriculum principles there arises a new problem; that of supplying reference books. Since the public library now supplies the fiction which was once kept in the Sunday School library, the latter may become more specialized in its own field. The church school library should consist of more than a few shelves and a secretary's desk. It must be an important center for work in order to fill its place in a progressive education program. There should be space enough for a study table and several chairs, with shelves around the walls containing books of a particular religious value which may be used by both teachers and pupils. An apportionment of space for future growth is of course expected. Instead of being an addition to the Sunday School for the purpose of entertainment, the library now assumes a central place in the program of the church school.

Instead of the usual Sunday School assembly hall, which is not always conducive to an attitude of worship, it would be well for the church to build a small chapel for the specific use of the children. This would be a place of worship which the children could call their own. The interior work should be as well done as the church can possibly afford, and the whole atmosphere be one of worship and reverence. This chapel is not for one particular department, but for the use of all departments on Sunday morning, the worship periods being arranged by schedule.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Secular and religious education have a common purpose: the development of character and social harmony. Secular education lays the foundations for the achievement of these ideals by giving the child a knowledge of the world of facts with which he can make his own living and contribute to the well-being of society. Secular education also encourages and seeks to promote the virtues of diligence, obedience, honesty, respect and consideration for the rights of others along with the teaching of facts, realizing that no child is prepared to assume his place in society without these qualities. The public school, however, is not permitted to make use of what experience has proved to be the highest incentive for character: religion. The duty therefore falls upon the church to complete the educational process by interpreting

the facts learned in the public school in terms of a Divine Ruler. This is the highest achievement possible for education, for through religious education the child may be brought nearest to the ideals of the total educational process. The public school has paved the way for the church; the responsibility lies with that organization to develop an efficient plan of religious education. How can it best accomplish this task?

Until recently the church has been interested only in preaching to adults, not feeling the need of an educational program, while the public school has forged ahead and developed a very efficient educational system. When the church awoke to its task of religious education it naturally sought to follow the machinery of the public school, since it had no technique of its own. But though the public school has done its work well under the system which its leaders created, this system is based upon adult authority and a static curriculum, and is not appropriate for character training. As opposed to this theory of education, various experimental schools have been created, basing their educational procedure upon "child interest" and a growing curriculum. Since religious education is not handicapped by large class units, and does not rest upon the force of the law, it would profit greatly by following the theories of progressive education rather than the machinery of the public school. Moreover, the growth of character and social consciousness (which are the

particular interests of religious education) are aided greatly by personal fellowship with the teacher, which is a natural concomitant of progressive education.

THE NEW SCHOOL IN OPERATION

The new church school will be a place of activity, not for one hour on Sunday, preceding the church service, but from nine o'clock in the morning until Sunday evening. There will be alternate use of the children's chapel for worship services, while other groups are meeting in their class rooms, working in the large activity rooms, studying in the library, or walking about the church gardens with their teacher. Here, in the church auditorium, is the boys' choir at practice; there in the activity room, a group of girls, sewing dresses for a children's hospital; a group of little children is working at the sand table in that corner; the Junior department is worshiping together in the chapel; a senior class is meeting on the lawn under the trees; another group is absorbed in a discussion in class room B. Everywhere one goes he finds some sort of activity. One department finishes its worship service in the chapel, and another takes its place, while the former divides up into class groups that immediately go to their various tasks in different parts of the building or grounds. Yes, there is some noise and confusion, but each group has the appearance of active interest and definite purpose. There is no vestige of formality or suppression, but everywhere naturalness, spontaneity,

and reverence. What is the secret of this school?

The above description may be criticized as contradictory to the experience of past generations in education, and therefore merely visionary. How can we follow a method that is so anarchistic, and which puts so much responsibility upon the teacher and the child? Are not conformity and authority essential in dealing with children, and a plan of free activity dangerous to achievement and discipline?

The writer realizes that a picture such as the one just given demands a good deal of faith in human nature. Is it not true, however, that the surest way to achieve social harmony in future generations is to give the children of the present age free opportunity to express this harmony in their school activities? What we are suggesting here is a break from the formal, standardized methods that have characterized education for so many years, and a launching of the program of religious education into the freedom of the new schools. Recognizing the greatness of the cost, we nevertheless feel that the church school cannot carry the burden that society has asked it to bear without accepting the best that all education can offer. With the best in hand religious education can doubtless fill its place in the bringing about of character and social harmony.

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